

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 /096 W

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R 060845Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8253

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 0811

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, ETRD

SUBJECT: ROK TRADE WITH EASTERN EUROPE

REF: SEOUL 0810 (NOTAL)

1. FONMIN KIM DONG-JO ACKNOWLEDGED IN ROK TELEVISION INTERVIEWS FEBRUARY 5 THAT ROK GOODS ARE CURRENTLY BEING EXPORTED TO EASTERN EUROPE AND USSR VIA THIRD COUNTRIES. SEPARATE APPEARANCES ON THREE TV STATIONS FOLLOWED INSPECTION OF MOFA BY PRESIDENT PARK EARLIER IN DAY, WHEN FONMIN HAD REITERATED ROK FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE OF ESTABLISHING TIES WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES (REFTEL).

2. MOFA EAST EUROPE DIVISION CHIEF YI KI-CHU TOLD EMBOFF FEBRUARY 6 THAT FONMIN HAD PUBLICLY CONFIRMED
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EXISTENCE OF INDIRECT TRADE TIES WITH EAST EUROPEANS

IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM JOURNALISTS FOR EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANCE IN ROK POLICY OF SEEKING TIES WITH COMMUNISTS. YI SAID THAT PROSPECT OF OTHER, MORE DIRECT TIES, IS AS DIM AS EVER, AND THAT ROKG WISHES KOREAN PEOPLE TO BE AWARE THAT AT LEAST SOME ECONOMIC EXCHANGE IS TAKING PLACE. HE SAID THAT TRADE FIGURE CURRENTLY BEING USED WITHIN MOFA, BUT NOT MENTIONED BY FONMIN, IS ABOUT \$20 MILLION ANNUALLY FOR ALL TRADE WITH USSR AND ESTERN EUROPE. HE SAID THAT THERE IS NO WAY OF ACCURATELY MEASURING SUCH TRADE, HOWEVER.

3. ROK PRESS HAS GIVEN MAJOR EMPHASIS TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF INDIRECT TRADE WITH COMMUNISTS AND TO ROK DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE TOWARD EASTERN EUROPE. YI SAID THAT PRESS IS OBVIOUSLY EXAGGERATING PRIORITY ROKG PLACES ON TIES WITH COMMUNISTS. HE SAID THIS AREA OCCUPIED ONLY AN INSIGNIFICANT PART OF KIM'S BRIEFING OF PRESIDENT PARK, WHO IS MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN SECURITY AGAINST NORTH KOREA AND IN ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY WITH FREE WORLD.

4. COMMENT: FIGURE OF \$20 MILLION IS SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN WE HAVE HEARD BEFORE, WE HAVE NO WAY TO CONFIRM IT, ALTHOUGH WE ARE AWARE OF FREQUENT REPORTS OF SUCCESSFUL ROK BUSINESS DEALS WITH COMMUNISTS THROUGH MIDDLEMEN IN TOKYO, VIENNA, AND ELSEWHERE. ASIDE FROM THIS INDIRECT TRADE, THERE IS APPARENTLY NOTHING TO JUSTIFY RENEWED PRESS EXPECTATIONS ON DIPLOMACY TOWARD EAST EUROPE.
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